



AREA AGENCY ON AGING
REGION ONE, INCORPORATED

ANSWERS ON AGING

Name of Project: DOVES - A Domestic Violence Shelter Program for Older Adults

Name of Organization: Region One Area Agency on Aging
Phoenix, AZ

Choices for Independence Principle(s): Empowerment/Access to Information

Description:

In 2005, 27 percent of all domestic violence related deaths in Maricopa County, Arizona were of people aged 50 or older. Older victims of domestic violence live in fear of change and see no options to turn away from an abusive situation. An end result of much of this violence leaves people without shelter, a place to get mail, or to start over. The DOVES program, a comprehensive program to assist victims of late life domestic violence or abuse, was the result of an elder abuse coalition of more than 100 members throughout Maricopa County who saw the need for a another option a “shelter” for those victims. DOVES started in 1993 with a few local assisted living communities donating rooms for short-term stays. Seeing that short term was not the answer, the Area Agency on Aging sought out with its partners to seek another alternative. The result was a generous 30-year forgivable loan from the City of Phoenix for a single-floor nineteen unit apartment complex. The complex was old and in great need of repair. The apartment project refurbishment was a model of community collaboration. Local homebuilders devoted time and resources to fix and furnish the residences. The local community college interior design class brought color and design to each room. The final result was that each residence was not only “habitable,” but show-room elegant.

Partners involved in this effort include:

- City of Phoenix
- State of Arizona Department of Housing
- Virginia G. Piper Foundation
- The Nita Pulliam Foundation
- Scottsdale Community College – Interior Design Students (Apartment design)
- Geitz & Associates – Game Room and Office Renovation
- Homebuilders: Robson- Puhlte - Shea – Apartment furniture donations from their model homes.

The program provides management and advocacy, support groups, emergency housing and transitional housing for adults age 50 and over. The program allows stays of up to two years and provides counseling, support, case management, and job training for its residents. Besides making life changing decisions away from violence, some participants of the program have entered Older Americans Title V employment programs and now have unsubsidized jobs.

Many participants have returned to school. As a result of this program and its success, the city of Phoenix has donated 3 more apartments to provide permanent housing for the DOVE program “graduates.” In December 2006, the Area Agency on Aging, Region One received a \$35,075 grant from the Boeing Company. The grant will be used to provide the expansion of transitional housing and critical support services to older adults who are in abusive relationships. Currently 43 residents are participating.

For more information about this program, contact Mary Lynn Kasunic, Executive Director of the Area Agency on Aging, Region One at 602-264-2255 or by email at Kasunic@msn.com

The Website for the program is <http://www.aaaphx.org>